

Meraj Academy Times

The Meraj Academy Newsletter

Volume #1 Issue #3 November 2003

Dear Parents and Students,

I wish you all a very Happy Eid. May Allah (SWT) bestow His Mercy and Blessings on us all. Ameen.

Sincerely,
Ms. Ayesha

Nearing the End of Ramadan

By: Shoaib Mohammed, Eighth Grade

Ramadan, the Islamic month of patience, forgiveness, and mercy, is now at its end. Within the last five odd days of Ramadan, the night of Layla tul Qadr will come, Insha` Allah. This lone night is worth more than a thousand months of sawaab. Some Muslims stay up every night within the last ten and do dhikr. Insha` Allah we will all benefit from this great gift and do our best to do good deeds. May Allah forgive us all and grant us Jannat.



Eid Mubarak

By: Shoaib Mohammed, Eighth Grade

Before Ramadan ends, we must thank Allah for giving us the ability to fast through the month. Allah has blessed us with Eid ul Fitr. It is a celebration thank Allah for he let us complete fasting through the entire month. We thank Allah for granting us the ability to fast. Insha` Allah, we will have a wonderful Eid full if joy and happiness. Eid Mubarak.

Obligations of Eid

Excerpted from the Islamic Cultural Center Newsletter No. 52

It is natural for communities and nations to celebrate days or events of significance in their cultural life or history. Such celebrations take on different forms and include activities that are not always beneficial.

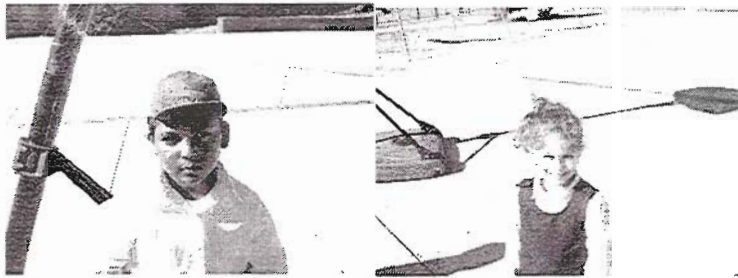
Islam does not suppress any decent natural inclinations but it transform such inclinations into positive expressions and adds its own dimension to human and natural practices. This is how we understand the hadith attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he arrived in Madinah and found its inhabitants observing two days of joy and entertainment. Upon enquiry the people told the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that these two days were days of joy and celebration carried over from the pre-Islamic era. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said to them that Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, has given them two better days instead - the days of Eid al-fitr and Eid al-Adha. The Prophet (peace be upon him) called Eid al-Fitr the day of reward "Yaum al jaizah." It is a day of thanksgiving to Allah for He enabled us to perform the duty of fasting through which we appreciate the deprivation of our unfortunate fellow-beings. Through fasting we control our desires so that we can become more sensitive to the purpose of life. Through reading and understanding the Holy Quran, we appreciate the greatest blessing that Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala bestowed upon as Muslims and humanity at large.

Student Achievements

By: Fatima Fofana, Seventh Grade

These students are being honored by their homeroom teachers for their special classroom achievements, Masha'Allah.

Kindergarten: Aya & Rakin - Both Aya and Rakin continue to work hard in their studies and help their fellow classmates.



First Grade: Abdullah - Abdullah is a very bright boy, always eager to learn new things.



Second Grade: Ridhwan - Ridhwan is an all around excellent student with outstanding behavior.



Third Grade: Sakeena - Sakeena has achieved excellence in academics.



Fourth Grade: Khadija - Khadija has excellent English grammar skills. She is also very well behaved.



Seventh Grade: Hamza - Hamza is doing well in class even though he is the youngest. Hamza is motivated in math.



This newsletter is published by Mr. Boodanian's 7th and 8th grade English class:

Adnan, Ali, Hamza, Shoaib, Eman, & Fatima
Please send any questions, concerns, or additions to the Meraj Academy office.

Student's Corner

A Person I Respect

By: Montesham Zahid, First Grade

I respect my dad. My dad loves me very much. My dad is a good person. My dad is like my friend. I will respect my dad always.

My Doctor

By Sania Esa, Second Grade

I have a doctor named Umbrean. When I grow up, I will be a doctor just like her. Doctors help people all the time. People go to the doctor when they are sick. Doctors are very nice and they help you very much. People like doctors very much, and when you are sick they give you medicine. Doctors are people that help you. Doctors like children, and they like to give children treats. I like doctors because they give me candy. People like to be doctors all the time.

Birthdays In December

By Eman Hamed, Seventh Grade

Make sure to wish a happy birthday to those students whose birthdays fall in December!

- Yousuf Jalala, First Grade, December 4th
- Hasnaa Rausdeen, Second Grade, December 23rd
- Ahmad Asouri, Third Grade, Dec 3rd
- Zamir Rahmany, Sixth Grade, Dec 6th

Happy Birthday to you all!

Quarterly Exams

Hamza Shaikh, Seventh Grade

Quarterly exams are coming up very soon. Each class should have received the schedule. The exams will run from Monday, December 8th until Friday, December 12th. All Students from kindergarten to eighth grade will be taking these exams.

The Next Field Trip

By: Adnan Subhan, Eighth Grade

The faculty and staff are planning this school's next field trip, and the students are giving suggestions about where to go. We have went around and asked the children where they want to go for the next field trip. Masha' Allah we have gotten so many wonderful suggestions. We would like to name all the places that the students suggested.

- Magic Mountain
- Universal Studios
- L.A. Zoo
- Tar Pits
- Disneyland
- Legoland
- Raging Waters
- Library
- Theater
- Park
- National Forest

Insha' Allah, we will all be able to agree on one fun and influential place to go for our next field trip.

Study Tips for Exams

Ali Sherwani, Seventh Grade

Since quarterly exams are coming up, proper study skills are important. Here are some tips to remember.

1. Before the exam: Split the material in different parts. Study a part of the material each day.
2. The day before the exam: Make sure to get a lot of rest.
3. The day of the exam: Wake-up early, eat a healthy meal, and make sure to have all your supplies ready.
4. During the exam: Focus on the questions you know. Don't get stuck on the ones you don't know.
5. Try your hardest and best wishes!

Obligations of Eid Continued

Reflecting upon the occasion of Eid al-fitr one should note its three main aspects. **First, Zakatul Fitr:** It's the alms that has been made obligatory for Ramadan. It is incumbent on every Muslim, young or old, male or female.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim record narration by Ibn Omar who said: 'Rasul Allah (peace be upon him) made Zakatul Fitr obligatory for Ramadan its minimum being four clasped handfuls of the produce of the land (i.e. one Sa'a). This was made obligatory upon all Muslims; male and female, young and old.'

Zakatul Fitr was decreed in Sha'baan in the second year of the Hijra in order to purify the fast of those who may have committed the sins of vain talk or slander while fasting. Above all it was instituted to help the poor and those in need.

Abu Dawoud, Ibn Maja, and Al-Darqatni record Ibn Abbas as having said: 'Rasul Allah (peace be upon him) made Zakatul-fitr an obligatory purification of fasting. To compensate for vain-talk and slander and to ameliorate sin by purchasing food for the needy. It will be accepted as Zakaat from whoever pays it before the Eid prayer, but if it is paid after the prayer it is considered a Sadaqa (charity). It is also incumbent on the free Muslim who is in possession of surplus food by the weight of one Sa'a to his personal or his families needs for a day and a night. This is obligatory upon him, those whom he is responsible for or custodian of, and all those dependant on him (i.e. his wife, children, parents, and servants). The Zakat al-Fitr translated into monetary terms would be a minimum amount of \$10.00 to be paid for every member of the family. It is supposed to be paid before the Eid prayer. This signifies that on certain occasions Islam advocated that caring for others may come even before prayer. It is important that we do not forget the needs of others on this particular day. **Second, the Salat al-Fitr** itself- in which Muslims more than in any other prayer the Greatness of Allah by constant

repetition of 'Allahu Akbar' affirm. He is the greatest reality in their lives and to Him alone they bow. The special nature of Eid celebrations ensures that people do not forget themselves or are carried away by senseless practices and customs. **Third,** the aspect that Muslims are advised to look cheerful in their best clothes, put on perfume, exchange greetings and visits - this is to signify that we worship Allah and rejoice in the bounties He has provided.

In a few days we will celebrate, Eid al-Fitr, but let us pause for a moment and reflect on the significance of Eids or celebrations in Islam. Festivities are part of the natural behavior of mankind and have been practiced throughout human history for a variety of reasons. Festivities could be for mere pleasure or to express joy for blessings granted to a community. The ancient Egyptians used to celebrate their happiness when the Nile rose and flowed with vigour or at the onset of spring when flowers blossomed.

Nowadays communities may commemorate inspiring occasions such as an independence day, to mark some constitutional achievement or to honor and pay homage to inspiring personalities.

Islam however over and above such celebration marks certain occasions by spiritual affirmation of its beliefs which lays strong claim to be religion of man in its uncorrupted and natural state. Its festivities are linked to the fulfilment of duties and the satisfaction derived therefrom. They are not expressed in gay abandon and merriment that do hard the injury to the individual and society.

Eid al-Fitr also marks the advent of the first day that Muslims resume a natural mode of living after a month of great sacrifice, devotion, self discipline and self denial. The day is accompanied by a deep sense of gratification for two reasons. One, that they have fulfilled an honorable duty in fasting during the month of Ramadan thereby manifesting their obedience to Allah and following the beloved Prophet's customs. Two, that they hope of reward in the hereafter for good done in this blessed month. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was quoted as having said: "The fasting believer has two moments of happiness: the first at the time of breaking the fast and the second when he is the presence of the Almighty in the life to come."

The word Eid in fact signifies recurring happiness. The word "fitr" has the basic meaning of beginning. From it is derived the word "fitrah" meaning nature and "iftar" which means the breaking of the fast. Eid al-Fitr is thus the festival of the breaking of the fast, a return to the normal or natural course of living and fulfilling

the requirements of nature. This is the day of reward.

Muslims need to appreciate and grasp the true meaning of this occasion. Giving Sadaqat-ul-Fitr or charity is the first requirement to be discharged of this day. This means that remembering the less fortunate and sharing with them. This occasion comes even before communion with Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala in prayer. We need to be aware of this especially at these times when there is so much suffering, poverty and famine in the world and when people are plagued by insecurity and dislocation caused by war and conflict.

The congregational prayer of Eid which follows is an opportunity for Muslims to express feeling of thanksgiving and a sense of unity. This is important especially when we bear in mind the state of the Ummah as it is today - plagued with internal strife and dissension. If Ramadan has meant anything to us we should now be in a better position to create more healthy and stable communities united in our beliefs and aspirations and working together towards common goals.

Going to and from the places of prayer on Eid day is a declaration that the Muslims are proud of their identity which is expressed in the constant prayer of the day. Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Laa ilaaha illa Allah, wa-Llaahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar wa lillaahi-l hamd. (God is the Most Great. God is the Most Great. There is no god but Allah. God is the Most Great. God is the Most Great. God is the Most Great and to God belongs all praise and thanks). Let our repetition of these words remind us that it is God alone whom we worship, to Whom we give thanks for His bounty and blessings, and to Whom we direct our cries for help.

May Allahu Subhana Wa Ta'ala bless the Muslim community and grant them many more such occasions accompanied with the feeling of real brotherhood and sincere love among themselves and deeper commitment to their faith.